

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-5 and 7-20 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 11, and 20 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, 14, 15, and 20 are sought to be amended. Support for the amendment may be found, for example, at page 3, FIG. 3, and throughout the originally filed application. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute similar or broader claims, with respect to the amended claims, in the future. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5 and 7-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Arya et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,833,888 ("Arya"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection, and the Response to Arguments section of the Office Action at pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Claims 1, 11, and 20

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the rejection, independent claims 1, 11, and 20 were amended to recite features that distinguish over the applied reference. For example, claim 1 recites:

a first deposition wall having a first surface, the surface being configured to receive a film of the cleaning liquid and being configured to be an outer wall of the cleaning device; and

a second deposition wall positioned centrally within the cleaning chamber and having a second surface facing the first surface, the second surface being configured to receive another film of the cleaning liquid.

Similarly, claim 11 recites, for example:

wherein a respective one of the plurality of separate deposition walls is centrally located within the system and has first and second surfaces, the first and second surfaces each being configured to receive another film of the cleaning liquid.

Claim 20 recites, for example:

at least one second deposition wall positioned centrally within the cleaning chamber and having a second surface facing the first surface, the second surface being configured to receive another film of the cleaning liquid;
a supply for the cleaning liquid arranged internally in the cleaning chamber... .

Without acquiescing to the Examiner's statements regarding Arya, Applicants submit that Arya fails to teach or suggest, for example, at least the above-noted distinguishing features.

Arya discloses a weeping weir gas/liquid interface structure (Arya, title), including an inlet flow passage member 12 (Arya, col. 4, lines 52-57; FIG. 1) and cylindrical flow passage member 24 (Arya, col. 5, lines 33-40 and 45-46). Liquid film 56 forms on the inner wall surface 72 (Arya, col. 6, lines 44-48); "liquid droplets [54], as a result of gravitational effect, fall and coalesce with other liquid droplets and aggregate to form a downwardly flowing liquid film 56," (Arya, col. 6 lines 44-46). As to a source of the liquid, "liquid can be introduced into the interior annular volume 70," (Arya, col. 6, lines 4-5) and Arya discloses "outer wall member 34 enclosingly circumscribing the second flow passage member 24 and defining therewith an enclosed interior annular volume 70," (Arya, col. 5, lines 61-63).

Furthermore, Arya teaches that liquid is provided on only cylindrical flow passage member 24, and that "[a]s a further advantage of this structure... the use of an upper liquid permeable portion 26 serves to minimize liquid usage," (Arya, column 7, lines 29-32). Thus, Applicant submits that Arya fails to teach or suggest at least the above-noted distinguishing features, for example, "a second deposition wall positioned centrally within the cleaning

chamber and having a second surface facing the first surface, the second surface being configured to receive another film of the cleaning liquid," as recited in claim 1 and similarly, using respective language, in claims 11 and 20.

Also, Arya fails to teach or suggest at least the additional above noted distinguishing feature in claim 20, for example, "a supply for the cleaning liquid arranged internally in the cleaning chamber," as recited in claim 20.

Accordingly, as the applied reference cannot be used to anticipate claims 1, 11, and 20, the claims are patentable over the applied reference.

Rejected claims 2-5 and 7-10 depend from independent claim 1, and rejected claims 12-19 depend from independent claim 11. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-5, 7-10, and 12-19 are allowable over the applied reference at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from claims 1 and 11, and also by virtue of their own distinguishing features.

For all the reasons above, Applicants request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that claims 1-5 and 7-20 be passed to allowance.

Additionally, the Office Action fails to specifically address the expressly recited features of the pending dependent claims. Under the Office's policy of compact prosecution, each claim should be reviewed for compliance with every statutory requirement for patentability in the initial review of the application, even if one or more claims are found to be deficient with respect to some statutory requirement. (MPEP §707.07(g)). It is submitted that the present application is not sufficiently informal, does not present an undue multiplicity of claims, or exhibit a misjoinder of inventions, so as to reasonably preclude a complete action on the merits. Thus, it is submitted that the Office's failure constitutes a failure to expeditiously provide the information necessary to resolve issues related to patentability that prevents the Applicant from, for example, presenting appropriate patentability arguments

and/or rebuttal evidence. (See The Official Gazette Notice of November 7, 2003). Additionally, it is submitted that the Office's failure needlessly encourages piecemeal prosecution, which is to be avoided as much as possible. (MPEP §707.07(g)). Accordingly, in the event that the Office maintains the rejection of any of the dependent claims, Applicant respectfully requests, in the interests of compact prosecution, that the Office apply references against each feature of each rejected dependent claim, on the record, and with specificity sufficient to support a prima facie case of anticipation (or obviousness).

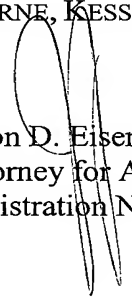
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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